

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 DEAE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07
JUSE-00 NSAE-00 SNM-02 TRSE-00 USIA-06 NSC-05
OES-06 OMB-01 AID-05 IGA-02 HEW-04 AGRE-00 DODE-00
SS-15 EB-08 CU-02 /086 W
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R 211030Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3353
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 RANGOON 1118

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR, BM
SUBJ: NEW IMPETUS IN BURMA NARCOTICS PROGRAM?--FALCO-BOURNE
VISIT, APRIL 11-13, 1977

SUMMARY: THE BURMESE GAVE MS FALCO AND DR BOURNE AN UNPRECE-
DENTEDLY CLOSE LOOK AT POPPY-DESTRUCTION AREAS IN
KACHIN AND SHAN STATES, SHOWED THEM TREATMENT CENTERS IN
MYITKYINA AND TAUNGGYI AS WELL AS RANGOON, AND MADE THEM
ACQUAINTED WITH CURRENT TOP LEADERSHIP OF NARCOTICS CONTROL
EFFORT. THIS EXTRAORDINARY EFFORT TO ESTABLISH THE BONA FIDES
OF THEIR PROGRAM MAY REFLECT A RECENT HIGH-LEVEL DECISION TO
CARRY BURMA'S BILATERAL COOPERATION WITH THE U.S. AT LEAST
A FEW STEPS FURTHER (BUT NOT, REPORTEDLY, SO FAR AS A
HERBICIDES PROGRAM). THE BURMESE ACCEPTED WITH ALACRITY
MS FALCO'S OFFER OF A REPLACEMENT HELICOPTER FOR THE ONE
LOST LAST AUGUST, AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT REPLACEMENT OF
LOSSES CAN BE MADE ALMOST AUTOMATIC IN FUTURE. THEY PROMISED
IMMEDIATE SIGNATURE OF THE PROAG TO PERMIT THE LONG-PENDING
TRANSFER OF FIELD RADIO EQUIPMENT. THE BURMESE ARE QUITE
SERIOUS AND "THINKING BIG" IN REGARD TO FIXED-WING AIRCRAFT;
THEY VIEW THE PROJECTED JUNE VISIT OF COL MYO AUNG, KO GYI,
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ET AL, AS AN OCCASION FOR DETAILED DISCUSSION OF THEIR TRANS-
PORT AIRCRAFT NEEDS (MS FALCO, WHILE WELCOMING SUCH DISCUSSION,
AVOIDED COMMITMENT AND STRESSED BUDGETARY LIMITATIONS). MORE
MODESTLY, THEY EXPRESSED INTEREST IN SCOUT-TYPE HELICOPTERS.
BURMESE INVOLVED IN PROGRAMS FOR ABUSE CONTROL AND PREVENTION
ASKED FOR RAW MOVIE FILM, PAPER AND PRINTING-INK FOR POSTERS,
AND LABORATORY EQUIPMENT. A SENIOR BURMESE MEDICAL OFFICIAL

ASKED IF AN AMERICAN EXPERT IN TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION COULD BE SENT OUT FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD TO HELP THE BURMESE DEVELOP THEIR PROGRAM FURTHER.

ACTIONS REQUESTED: 1) MS FALCO WANTS ACTION INITIATED AT ONCE TO ENSURE RPT ENSURE REPLACEMENT OF LOST BELL HELICOPTER WITHIN CURRENT FY; 2) IN PREPARATION FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH BURMESE DELEGATION IN JUNE, WITHOUT ANY PREJUDGMENT AS TO THE MERITS OF THE BURMESE REQUESTS, MS FALCO ASKS:

A) THAT A RESURVEY BE MADE OF POTENTIAL AVAILABILITY FROM ALL RPT ALL SOURCES OF STOL TURBO-PROP TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT WITH CAPABILITIES COMPARABLE OR SUPERIOR TO C-47;

B) THAT DICK GIBSON AND RUDY HALL BE MADE ESCORT OFFICERS FOR THE GROUP AND BROUGHT INTO PLANNING EARLY;

C) AS REGARDS SCOUT-TYPE HELICOPTERS, FIRM ASSESSMENT OF GUB REQUIREMENTS IN LIGHT OF PRESENT HOLDINGS SHOULD BE MADE. END SUMMARY.

1. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 55-HOUR VISIT BY MS MATHEA FALCO AND DR. PETER BOURNE TO BURMA APRIL 11-13, 1977 INCLUDED VISITS BY PLANE AND HELICOPTER TO AREAS WHERE POPPIES HAVE BEEN ERADICATED AROUND THE HEADWATERS OF THE IRRAWADDY NORTH OF MYITKYINA AND EAST OF NAMSANG IN THE SHAN STATE; MEETINGS WITH SENIOR OFFICIALS OF BURMA'S NARCOTICS EFFORT; INSPECTIONS AND BRIEFINGS AT TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION CENTERS IN RANGOON, MYITKYINA, AND TAUNGGYI, AND MEETINGS WITH THE UNFDAC DIRECTOR AND AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR R.S. LAURIE. THE VISIT CONVEYED AN IMPRESSION OF A VIGOROUS AND INCREASINGLY WELL-ROUNDED ANTI-CONFIDENTIAL

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NARCOTICS EFFORT. (E.G., DIRECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE U SHWE THAN STATED THAT 8,500 ACRES WERE DESTROYED THIS YEAR, WELL OVER HALF OF WHICH WERE IN AREAS NOT COVERED IN THE '75-76 DESTRUCTION CAMPAIGN). THE MANNER IN WHICH THE VISIT WAS CONDUCTED, E.G., ALLOWING ACCESS TO PARTS OF BURMA FROM WHICH EVEN MILITARY ATTACHES HAVE BEEN EXCLUDED IN THE PAST, PLUS THE REQUEST FOR AIRCRAFT, CLEARLY REFLECT A FORMAL HIGH-LEVEL DECISION BY THE GUB TO SEEK FURTHER EXPANSION OF BILATERAL COOPERATION WITH THE U.S. IN THE NARCOTICS CONTROL AREA. INDEED, DR BOURNE WAS TOLD SPECIFICALLY THAT PRESIDENT NE WIN HAD PRESIDED OVER A RECENT MEETING ON THE ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORT, AT WHICH ONE OF THE DECISIONS TAKEN HAD BEEN TO DEFER CONSIDERATION OF A HERBICIDES PROGRAM AT THIS TIME. THIS DECISION WAS SUBSEQUENTLY CONVEYED TO MS FALCO BY SEVERAL HIGH BURMESE OFFICIALS.

2. THERE WERE SEVERAL EVIDENCES OF GREATER RESPONSIVENESS ON THE PART OF THE BURMESE. HOME MINISTER (AND NARCOTICS CONTROL BOARD CHAIRMAN) COL SEIN LWIN ACCEPTED WITH

ALACRITY MS FALCO'S OFFER OF A HELICOPTER TO REPLACE THE ONE LOST LAST AUGUST (ACTION REQUEST 1), AND U SHWE THAN EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT REPLACEMENT OF LOSSES COULD IN FUTURE BE MADE MORE AUTOMATIC. U SHWE THAN, SIMILARLY, PROMISED PROMPT SIGNATURE OF THE PROAG TO PERMIT THE LONG-PENDING TRANSFER OF RADIO EQUIPMENT.

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3. THE GUB'S EXPERIENCE WITH THE NARCOTICS PROGRAM SO FAR HAS DOUBTLESS ALLAYED INITIAL MISGIVINGS ABOUT DANGERS TO THEIR NONALIGNED CREDENTIALS. A NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL FACTORS COULD ALSO HAVE IMPELLED THE BURMESE TOWARD A STEP-UP OF THEIR BILATERAL COOPERATION WITH US. ONE UNDOUBTED PRIME FACTOR IS THE BURMESE DESIRE FOR FIXED-WING AIRCRAFT, WHICH THEY CANNOT REALISTICALLY HOPE TO MEET FROM OTHER THAN U.S. SOURCES. IN CONVERSATION WITH MS FALCO AND DR BOURNE, THE BURMESE MENTIONED A NEED FOR NINE STOP TURBO-PROP AIRCRAFT WITH A TROOP CARRYING CAPACITY OF THIRTY. IT IS REASONABLE TO SUPPOSE THAT THE GUB WOULD BE GLAD TO GET ANYTHING TO FILL THE GAP LEFT BY THE RECENT GROUNDING OF THEIR C-47S). THE BURMESE INFORMED US THAT THEY WANT TO ADD AIR FORCE COL KO GYI (COLONEL, AIR STAFF) TO THE GROUP WHOSE VISIT TO THE U.S. IS PROJECTED FOR EARLY JUNE (OTHER PROBABLE MEMBERS: COL MYO AUNG, U SHWE THAN, MAJ. TIN MAUNG) IN ORDER THAT THE GROUP MAY HAVE THE TECHNICAL EXPERTISE NECESSARY TO EXPLORE ALL ALTERNATIVES IN DETAIL.

4. MS FALCO SOUGHT TO CONVEY VERY CLEARLY TO THE BURMESE

THAT THEIR REQUEST FOR FIXED-WING AIRCRAFT WOULD BE CON-
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SIDERED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF NARCOTICS CONTROL BUDGETARY
CONSTRAINTS. HOWEVER, SHE EX-
PRESSED A READINESS TO FACILITATE, WITHOUT COMMITMENT ON
OUR PART, FURTHER EXPLORATION OF THE SUBJECT WHEN THE
BURMESE GROUP VISITS THE U.S.--HENCE MS FALCO'S DESIRE
THAT RUDY HALL, WHO NOT ONLY GETS ON WELL WITH THE
BURMESE, BUT IS INTIMATELY FAMILIAR WITH THE AIRCRAFT
INDUSTRY, JOIN DICK GOBSON AS ESCORT OFFICER AND BROUGHT IN ON THE
PLANNING OF THE GROUP'S ITINERARY.

5. THE BURMESE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN ACQUISITION OF
SCOUT-TYPE HELICOPTER. THE NATURE OF THE TERRAIN OVER
WHICH THE VISITORS WERE FLOWN IN THE U.S. SUPPLIED BELL
HELICOPTERS MADE VIVIDLY APPARENT THE ADVANTAGES OF A
SMALLER HELICOPTER FOR CERTAIN TASKS OF CARAVAN INTER-
DICTION AND POPPY-ERADICATION. THIS POSSIBILITY SHOULD BE
EXPLORED AS WELL AS OTHER MEANS OF PROVIDING RECONNAISSANCE
CAPABILITY.

6. VISITS TO TREATMENT CENTERS AND DISCUSSIONS WITH RANGOON
PSYCHIATRIC HOSP. DIRECTOR DR. NE WIN, UNFDAC DIRECTOR U ZAW WIN,
AND OTHER OFFICIALS REVEALED A
GROWING EMPHASIS ON DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION, CONTROL, AND
TREATMENT WITHIN BURMA, BUT ALSO SHOWED THE INADEQUACY OF
THE PRESENT PROGRAM. COINCIDENT WITH OUR VISIT TO TAUNGGYI,
HEALTH MINISTER U KYI MAUNG WAS IN TOWN TO ACCEPT THE TURN-
OVER OF A TREATMENT FACILITY CONSTRUCTED WITH FUNDS COLLECTED
LOCALLY. THE FACILITY, THOUGH SMALL, WAS LAID OUT WELL;
HOWEVER, IT LACKED LABORATORY EQUIPMENT. THE MYITKYINA
FACILITY HAS BEEN OPERATING FOR A COUPLE OF YEARS, AND
SEEMED GENERALLY WELL RUN, THOUGH ALSO ON A SMALL SCALE.
HERE, AS IN RANGOON, THERE WERE HOME-MADE POSTERS, BUT NO
SOPHISTICATED AUDIO-VISUAL EQUIPMENT WAS SEEN. THESE
OBSERVATIONS FULLY SUBSTANTIATED THE STATEMENTS OF U ZAW WIN,
UNFDAC DIRECTOR, ABOUT THE NEED FOR A BROAD RANGE OF
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SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT:--RAW MOVIE FILM AND DEVELOPING
CHEMICALS, PAPER AND PRINTING INK SUITABLE FOR POSTERS, AND
LABORATORY EQUIPMENT. U ZAW WIN EXPRESSED A PREFERENCE FOR
UNFDAC AS A CHANNEL FOR SUCH EQUIPMENT.

7. DR NE WIN'S REQUEST FOR THE ASSIGNMENT OF AN AMERICAN
EXPERT IN DRUG ABUSE TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION IS
CLEARLY WORTHY OF SUPPORT. THE RECENT SIX-MONTH RESIDENCY
OF AMERICAN SPECIALIST DR. K. MONSOUR AT RANGOON PSYCHIATRIC
HOSPITAL, ARRANGED
UNDER EXCHANGE-OF-PERSONS PROGRAM AUSPICES, WAS MOST BENE-
FICIAL, ACCORDING TO DR. NE WIN. THE LIKELIHOOD THAT THE
MONSOUR EXPERIENCE MAY HAVE HELPED TO GENERATE NE WIN'S
PRESENT REQUEST SUGGESTS THE DESIRABILITY OF COORDINATING
WITH CU ABOUT COMPLIANCE WITH THE REQUEST.
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Message Attributes

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